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ISSUES RELATING TO THE
LABOUR FORCE POSITION
OF THE DISABLED IN CANADA
Frank Sampson
July 1981

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This is one in a series of technical studies prepared for the Task Force on Labour Market Development. The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Task Force. They do not reflect the views of the Government of Canada.

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ISSUES RELATING TO THE LABOUR FORCE POSITION
OF THE DISABLED IN CANADA

Frank K.C. Sampson

This paper examines a number of areas in which there are significant constraints on the labour force participation of disabled people in Canada. This population is sizeable, accounting for an estimated 2.2 million Canadians, about a third of whom are judged fully capable of holding regular employment. The unemployment rate for the group, however, has been estimated to be very high-- probably in excess of 50 percent.

The poor labour force position of disabled people is rooted in the attitudinal, systemic and physical barriers hindering their full participation in the work place. Employers' reluctance to hire the disabled is, to a large extent, based on misconceptions and/or lack of awareness of the latter's capabilities coupled with an unwillingness to incur the additional costs involved in hiring them. This is reflected in the general lack of suitable architectural arrangements, in the unavailability of modified work schedules or equipment to cater to the disabled and, systemically, in the general absence of company policies governing recruitment of the disabled.

Many voluntary agencies working with disabled people feel that available job opportunities for them could be expanded considerably with incentive programs to assist employers in carrying out architectural modifications, acquiring technical aids, planning work schedules and processes to maximize their output and providing on-the-job training tailored to their needs. More regulatory solutions have also been proposed; for example, enacting building codes and other regulations to make the physical environment fully

accessible to the disabled, and introducing mandatory affirmative action systems. In addition, it has been argued that there should be incentives for active sustained company participation in making sheltered work environments effective, viable institutions for training and rehabilitation, and in some cases for permanent employment for persons of greatly diminished mental or physical capacity.

These initiatives must be paralleled on the supply side. There is a need to provide special counselling and skills-training programs to the disabled and to incorporate trained specialists within existing Canada Employment Centre services for these purposes. Since some of the high unemployment among the disabled is due to their unawareness of employment opportunities, pre-employment counselling is a must, as is continuing post-placement contact to ensure that employment is not lost through lack of knowledge of the means to fulfill normal job requirements. Finally, some degrees of disability may require continuing support in areas such as transportation, special training allowances and regulatory mechanisms to guarantee the disabled fair and equitable remuneration.

The paper concludes that without legal requirements or strong compliance mechanisms and incentives for employers to hire the disabled, and without significant amplification of federal program effort to prepare and assist disabled people in the labour market, the institutionalized patterns that have resulted in the weak labour force position of the disabled are unlikely to show significant change. In this regard, particular support should be given to the affirmative action initiative and the role of the CECs.

SOMMAIRE

QUESTIONS RELATIVES À LA SITUATION DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES AU SEIN DE LA POPULATION ACTIVE DU CANADA

Frank K.C. Sampson

Ce document examine un certain nombre de domaines où il existe des contraintes importantes à l'activité des personnes handicapées au Canada. Ce groupe est d'une taille assez imposante et représente environ 2,2 millions de Canadiens, dont près du tiers sont considérés comme étant parfaitement capables d'occuper un emploi régulier. Cependant, on estime que le taux de chômage pour ce groupe est très élevé et atteint probablement plus de 50 %.

La situation médiocre des personnes handicapées au sein de la population active tient aux obstacles systémiques et physiques ainsi qu'aux vieilles mentalités qui les empêchent de se tailler une place convenable sur le marché du travail. Les employeurs hésitent, en grande partie, à embaucher des personnes handicapées parce qu'ils comprennent mal ou ne connaissent pas les capacités de ces personnes et ne veulent pas assumer les coûts additionnels que suppose leur recrutement. Cette attitude se traduit par le manque général d'édifices conçues en vue des besoins des personnes handicapées, par l'inexistence de régimes de travail ou d'équipement adaptés à ces personnes et, sur le plan systémique, par le manque général, chez les entreprises, de principes directeurs régissant le recrutement des personnes handicapées.

Bon nombre d'organismes bénévoles oeuvrant auprès de personnes handicapées estiment que les possibilités d'emploi qui sont offertes à ces personnes, pourraient être accrues de beaucoup par la mise en oeuvre de programmes spéciaux visant à aider les employeurs à procéder aux modifications

architecturales nécessaires, à se procurer le soutien technique, à planifier les régimes et les procédés de travail afin de maximiser leur rendement et à fournir de la formation en cours d'emploi adaptée à leurs besoins. Dans le rapport, on propose également des solutions d'ordre législatif. Par exemple, il faudrait adopter des codes du bâtiment et d'autres règlements pour rendre le milieu physique totalement accessible aux personnes handicapées, ainsi que des programmes obligatoires d'action positive. L'auteur fait valoir en outre que des stimulants s'imposent pour amener les entreprises à participer activement et de façon continue aux efforts destinés à faire des ateliers protégés des institutions efficaces et viables pour la formation et la réadaptation des personnes handicapées et, dans certains cas, pour l'emploi permanent des personnes dont les capacités mentales ou physiques sont grandement diminuées.

Ces initiatives doivent avoir leur pendant du côté de l'offre. Il est nécessaire d'offrir des programmes spéciaux de counselling et de formation professionnelle aux personnes handicapées et d'affecter à cette fin des spécialistes dans les Centres d'emploi du Canada. Comme une partie du chômage élevé chez les personnes handicapées est attribuable au fait qu'elles ne connaissent pas ou ne peuvent percevoir les possibilités d'emploi qui s'offrent à elles, il est absolument nécessaire de leur offrir du counselling de pré-emploi et de rester en contact avec elles après le placement pour veiller à ce qu'elles ne perdent pas leur poste parce qu'elles ne sont pas au fait des exigences normales de l'emploi. Enfin, les personnes atteintes d'un certain degré d'incapacité peuvent avoir besoin d'une aide continue dans des domaines comme le transport, d'allocations spéciales de

formation et de mécanismes de réglementation pour que leur soit garantie une rémunération juste et équitable.

L'auteur termine son rapport en faisant valoir qu'à défaut d'exigences légales ou de mécanismes efficaces de respect des obligations contractuelles et de stimulants à l'intention des employeurs pour qu'ils recrutent des personnes handicapées et que sans une intensification importante des efforts du gouvernement fédéral pour préparer les personnes handicapées à se tailler une place sur le marché du travail et leur accorder l'aide nécessaire, il est peut probable que la mentalité traditionnelle et les structures institutionnelles se modifie. À cet égard, il faudrait appuyer de façon particulière les mesures d'action positive et le rôle des CEC.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the main issues relating to the labour force position of the disabled. Although this group constitutes a fairly substantial segment of the Canadian population, relatively little is known about its composition and capabilities. For the most part, the disabled have been socially invisible, remaining on the periphery of most societal processes and, if the current estimates of unemployment among employable disabled are correct, they have been largely excluded from the labour market.

The factors contributing to this exclusion are explored in the body of the paper. Many of them relate to the relative absence of policies and mechanisms that would, on the demand side, render the workplace more accessible to the disabled as well as improve their recruitment possibilities. On the supply side, the issues centre on the adequacy of existing training and placement initiatives and the provision of means (programs, services, allowances) for the disabled to cope with the additional work-related requirements their condition entails.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINATIONS

Definitions of disability and related terminology used in this paper are consistent with those used in developing the 1978-79 Canada Health Survey (CHS). The CHS constitutes the latest source of nationally representative data on Canada's disabled; the last comprehensive data base came from the Canada Sickness Survey of 1951. Estimates of the size and composition of the disabled population in Canada are based on preliminary unpublished statistics from this survey.

The definition of disability was borrowed from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and broadened to take account of the overall well being of the individual. Further distinctions were made between the concepts of impairment, disability and handicap and their relationships defined with particular reference to the disabled population. These are presented below. It should be noted that these definitions have a fairly global application since they are the result of consensus among countries participating in the OECD and in the World Health Organization (WHO).

Disability is defined in terms of the effects of conditions or impairments on an individual's ability to perform normal daily activities. (OECD)

Dimensions of physical, emotional/psychological and social well being can all be incorporated into this concept. Long-term duration of impairments (usually in excess of 3 months) is an integral part of this concept.

Impairment describes any disturbance of or interference with the normal structure and function of the body, including the systems of mental function;

Disability describes the loss or reduction of functionalability and activity that is consequent upon impairment;

Handicap reflects the value attached to an individual's status and thus describes the disadvantage that is consequent upon impairment and disability. (WHO)

Within this WHO concept, a person with a missing leg would be considered to have an impairment, his inability to climb stairs would be considered a disability, while his inability to find employment because of a lack of special facilities would be considered a handicap.

Major activity refers to the activity the individual spent most time doing during the past year. Choices were: "working", "housework", "school", "other" (retired, etc.). (CHS)

THE DISABLED POPULATION

According to the Canada Health Survey, 81 per cent of the 2,655,000 Canadians with physical or mental impairment were disabled. Of these 2,165,000 disabled persons, 62 per cent were of working age (15-64), another 27 per cent were in the retirement age group and the remaining 11 per cent were 14 years of age or less (Table 1).

From the viewpoint of labour market development, the focal group is the disabled population of working age, a total of 1,345,000 persons. Not all of these are employable: 310,000, or 23 per cent, indicated that their condition or impairment had left them unable to perform their major activity. Of the remainder, only 48 per cent (499,000) identified working as their major activity; most of these were men. The other 52 per cent of those partially disabled vis-à-vis their principal activity were engaged in housework or schooling or were retired. Women formed the majority of this group.

Isolating the group towards which employment assistance measures would be targetted can be done only in gross terms. As detailed information on employment status or job search activity is not yet available from the CHS, estimates have been derived using information and estimates of the proportions of disabled in employment from national voluntary agencies. First, on the question of employability, these sources indicate that about 50 per cent of disabled adults are employable. Applied to the CHS data in Table 1, this proportion identifies some 672,500 persons of the working age population, 15-64 years of age, as potential labour force participants. If one assumes that the totally disabled are unemployable and should be excluded, the figure drops to 517,500 persons, i.e. half the partially disabled. This

latter figure compares favourable with the proportion citing working as their main activity.

TABLE 1

THE DISABLED POPULATION IN CANADA 1979 - (PRELIMINARY)

	Total N (000)	Male N (000)	Female N (000)
Impaired	2,665	1,249	1,416
Disabled Population	2,156	1,041	1,116
Working Age Disabled (15-64)	1,345	656	690
Total Disability vis-a-vis major activity -Unemployable	310	230	80
Partial Disability vis-a-vis major activity	1,035	426	610
a) Work	499	352	148
b) Housework	426	2*	424
c) School	35*	14*	21*
d) Other Inactive (Retired, etc.)	75	58	17*

* Standard error of over 20% - use with caution
Source: Preliminary Statistics - Canada Health Survey
1978-79

The second consideration is the employment status of the disabled population. The national agencies estimate that unemployment rates run as high as 85 per cent in this population. WITH REFERENCE TO The estimates of employable disabled noted above, this would mean that between 440,000 and 572,000 persons are potential candidates for assistance in obtaining employment. These would be base figures since there are no data to determine how many of the employed need further help or whether any of the persons engaged in housework are pursuing this principal activity through lack of sufficient opportunity and/or aid to becoming gainfully employed.

In the absence of a clearer specification of the disabled labour force and its characteristics, the analysis of the labour market needs of the disabled has been based on information submitted by voluntary agencies on their behalf to the Special Committee on the Disabled and Handicapped. The voluntary sector plays a more critical role in the affairs of the disabled in Canada than it does for any other disadvantaged group. There is a large and ever-growing number of organizations that represent and assist the disabled in a variety of areas including labour force participation. The Department of Health and Welfare estimates a total of 3500 such organizations currently active; in terms of the CHS estimate of the disabled population, this works out to one organization for every 600 disabled persons.

One major implication of this high density is that collectively, these organizations can provide a more precise articulation of needs because of the range of their activities with the disabled at the community level. Furthermore the feasibility of some policy approaches can be examined more realistically since there has been considerable

experimentation with a variety of initiatives within the voluntary sector to meet these needs. Where the activities of organizations for the disabled have touched on employment development concerns, their observations are therefore of great utility.

The chief limitation is that in articulating particular needs, these organizations usually do not specify precisely what proportion of their clientele (or how many disabled persons) are at risk. Their claims ostensibly apply to all clients although their case orientation would suggest that, in some instances, the claims derive from difficulties encountered in servicing a few cases. The end result is that while their observations generally have a high degree of validity, the scope of application remains undefined. Priorities for action are therefore difficult to determine except in very general terms.

DEMAND CONSIDERATIONS

In their 1977 U.S. study of vocational rehabilitation, SAR Levitan and Robert Taggart note the central handicap the disabled face in the labour market.

Employer surveys evidence a general reluctance to hire the disabled when non-disabled workers are available. Many employers believe that there are higher costs, such as increased worker's compensation expenses or inflated medical and life insurance premiums. Although most believe that the disabled will be more reliable, they fear involuntary absenteeism and turnover. Another consideration is the lack of flexibility in job assignments and the difficulty of promoting.¹

This reluctance has significant effects on the employment of the disabled as indicated by the estimated unemployment rates for the disabled and nondisabled populations in Table 2. It is also reflected in the general lack of suitable architectural arrangements, in the unavailability of modified work schedules or equipment to cater to the disabled and in the general absence of company policies governing recruitment of the disabled.

Obviously, from a company's perspective, the disabled constitute a marginal work force. Their marginality increases with the degree of limitation their condition imposes on the performance of job requirements and the scope of any special arrangements vis-à-vis organizational process that are necessary to make the disabled person fully productive. This situation is further compounded by the fact that the disabled population is likely to have a lower education/training profile than the non-disabled population since a substantial proportion of impairments are present early in life and would affect schooling.

¹ Sar Levitan and Robert Taggart, Jobs for the Disabled (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977) p.8.

TABLE 2

ESTIMATED UNEMPLOYMENT, NON-DISABLED, DISABLED

Total disabled with working as main activity	499,000
Non-disabled labour force (E+U 1979 less 1	10,709,000
Disabled unemployed (est)	440,000
Non-disabled unemployed (U 1979 less 3)	398,000
Unemployment rates (est)	
- Non-disabled (4/2)	3.7%
- Disabled (3/1)	85.0%

It is therefore unlikely that companies will adjust their preference for non-disabled workers without some incentives from government. Several initiatives that bear directly on the recruitment of disabled workers are already in place, e.g., wage subsidies and training allowances. However, many voluntary agencies point out that such programs need amplification in terms of coverage and funding as well as approaches used.

Areas in which incentive programs might help to stimulate recruitment of disabled workers include assisting companies in carrying out architectural modifications, in acquiring technical aids for use by the disabled, in planning work schedules and processes to maximize the output of disabled workers and in providing on-the-job training tailored to their needs.

Some agencies argue that a framework of regulations is a necessary adjunct to this thrust. Essentially, the use of incentives rests on moral suasion. While appeals to companies to be good corporate citizens and to expand their community leadership role have led to the hiring of more disabled persons, this has been on a "special case" basis and not as part of the recruitment policy of companies. In consequence, the extent of recruitment among the disabled is less than if they were treated as an integral part of the labour force.

The proposed regulations flow in two directions. The first group envisages changing the environment such that the disabled would be on a more equal footing with the non-disabled in terms of access to the work-place. Many agencies suggest the adoption of building codes and municipal regulations that would guarantee accessibility of the physical environment to the disabled. The second direction is increasing employment for the disabled through quota systems that would be designed to achieve a more equitable representation of the disabled among the employed. In all cases, the regulations should be accompanied by mechanisms to ensure compliance.

The third set of concerns voiced by voluntary agencies relate to facilitating the linkage between work and home environments. Since many of the disabled, especially those with physical disability, experience difficulties in commuting to work, flexible work schedules (staggered hours, part-time work, etc.) are essential to avoid undue complications during rush hours or to enable these workers to take advantage of special transportation services where available. Another solution is to encourage companies to develop work modules that can be performed in any location and to assist them in making related job tasks available to

the disabled in their home environments (institutions, private homes) or in sheltered work environments. This appears to be eminently possible in the computer and other electronics industries where experience has shown that communications between plant and worker can be easily maintained through electronic and telephone hook-up.

SHELTERED WORK ENVIRONMENTS

In reality, the foregoing discussion focusses on a particular subset of the disabled, namely those whose productivity can be brought close to normal levels with specific aids. However, it is equally important to recognize the fact that diminished capacity among the partially disabled severely constrains the accomplishment of routine job requirements in the normal work environment. The sheltered work environment has therefore been used to provide employment opportunities for members of the latter group.

Currently, opinion is divided on the impact of this type of institution. Some agencies have a rather negative view of the sheltered work environment as a total institution functioning as a mere holding tank and constraining the possibility of an independent life style for the disabled. To some extent this position is based on an activist perspective that seeks to reduce the social invisibility of the disabled that these institutions inadvertently support. However, the criticism also stems from inadequacies in the existing institutions which prevent them from fully serving the needs of the disabled.

Theoretically, the sheltered work environment is intended to function as 1 (a "halfway house" for training and rehabilitation of disabled persons before their integration into the general work force and 2) a permanent work area for persons with severely limited work capacity. In either case, the linkage of this sub system into the general economy is critical if the institution is not to become a backwater. This has been one of the major problems for these institutions.

A number of recommendations on improving the sheltered workshop system have been advanced. It has been pointed out that the system's effectiveness in training and rehabilitation would be greatly enhanced by active, sustained company participation in creating opportunities for intergration into the work force. Some suggestions include spells of work experience in industrial settings during rehabilitation and assistance in developing technical aids and equipment. Also, with regard to its development as a permanent work area, the system would benefit enormously from company support in areas such as enhancing management capability as well as generating and attracting trainers and other qualified staff; developing effective marketing mechanisms for products from these institutions and assisting in the development of production processes suited to the unique needs of the disabled. Voluntary agencies have suggested that government seek ways to encourage companies to use their considerable resources to help expand and improve the effectiveness of these sheltered work environments, possibly using tax credits as an enticement.

SUPPLY CONSIDERATIONS

Apart from stimulating the expansion of job opportunities in the private sector and in sheltered environments, most agencies desire a stronger government role in improving the employability of the disabled and in support of the disabled with regard to obtaining and retaining employment. The general concurrence is that coordination of the efforts of federal, provincial and municipal agencies with those of community organizations would be a major first step towards providing a more comprehensive range of services to the disabled. In addition, however, there are several specific areas where initiatives are urgently needed. These include a) skill improvement, b) placement services and c) employment support. Agency concerns in each of these areas are briefly summarized below.

a) Skill Improvement

The jurisdiction of the provincial governments in training matters, and their impact on projected outcomes of training programs originating with the federal government is well recognized by the voluntary agencies. At the same time, the federal government with its primary responsibility for employment could exercise leadership in the field of consultation with the provinces and the private and voluntary sectors on training and other areas affecting the handicapped. The dialogue would be of immense value in developing a more favourable context for pursuing improvements in training programs to meet the needs of the disabled.

More specifically, it has been suggested that the employability of the disabled population will be enhanced significantly by an increased emphasis from the Canada

Employment and Immigration Commission (ECIC) on providing opportunities for lower-level skill training and for labour force entry through programs such as Basic Skills Training and Development (BTSD) and Basic Job Readiness Training (BJRT). Opportunities for on-the-job training should also be increased through incentives to employers (subsidies) to develop and maintain such programs. In addition, special training programs focussing on the disabled should be developed and tested with the cooperation of employers in the public and private sectors.

In recognition of the unique needs of many disabled persons, there is a call for more effort in training specialists to work with the disabled prior to their entry or reentry into the work force. Further, as a general principle, trainers coming in contact with the disabled should undergo some form of sensitivity training to permit them to cope with and to be responsive to the latter's needs. Other initiatives that would improve the effectiveness of training for the disabled include providing more adequate transportation allowances to accompany training, easy access to training facilities and appropriate technical aids and equipment for trainees. For some agencies, these requirements indicate the necessity of a special training centre for the disabled. However, opinion is mixed. In keeping with the integrationist perspective, there is now a strong drive to realize these goals within the context of the normal training process rather than by further segregating the disabled. The latter approach is considered perfectly feasible with sufficient training and legal constraint under affirmative action programs.

b) Placement Services

The comments of the voluntary agencies relate to the three main phases of the placement process. It is argued that part of the high unemployment among the disabled person's perception of and experience with for participation. The disabled person's perception of and experience with attitudinal barriers in the labour market are often reinforced by the perception that jobs are designed for able bodied people. Community outreach and pre-employment counselling is an essential strategy in counteracting these perceptions and in eventually securing employment for the disabled.

Current CEIC initiatives in the area are considered less effective than they could be. Inadequacies have been noted in the availability of program information to prospective clients and in provision of the special pre-employment course opportunities and counselling required. Both of these problems are in turn directly rooted in the lack of counsellors professionally qualified to deal with the employment problems of the disabled and in the scarcity of resources generally at the Canada Employment Centre level.

Those disabled persons who find their way into the normal CEC placement process are still at a disadvantage in that their placement requires more time and extra effort. In this connection, it is suggested that the CECs increase the number of counsellors to allow more time for counselling the disabled and include as part of counsellor training a knowledge of techniques for coping with the placement problems of the disabled group. It would also be advisable to hire disabled counsellors for both symbolic and practical reasons.

Several recommendations were advanced concerning the improvement of placement rates in the disabled population. First, following careful assessment by counsellors, the CECs should maintain employment lists of the available disabled and their work capabilities. Employer education programs could be conducted to increase awareness of the potential of the disabled work force. Hiring would be enhanced by giving higher rates of subsidy to employers for disabled workers and by government leadership in developing hiring policies designed to increase the number of disabled in its own work force. A national job creation program, developed cooperatively with the private and voluntary sectors, adequately financed and with a sufficiently long time frame for projects, could also constitute a very useful means to long-term employment for the disabled following participation in the projects. It would give the disabled valuable experience in managing their disability in a transitional work setting.

The necessity of follow-up counselling after placement was also noted. The need to supplement basic training with on-the-job training poses a greater problem for the disabled than for the normal worker. In many instances, the requirements of on-the-job training mean further requests for counsellor assistance in locating services and programs to cover various aspects such as training and transportation allowances and employer reimbursement. In addition, many of the working disabled who are under-employed need counselling on other employment options. In consequence, there is an urgent need for the CEC to develop a more informed counselling service for the working disabled.

c) Employment Support

Given the prevailing reluctance towards employing the disabled, the voluntary sector advocates a range of measures for employment protection and support of the disabled worker. The more robust measures proposed include legislation guaranteeing the disabled the right to work, and regulatory policies and mechanisms to guarantee fair and equitable remuneration for disabled workers in open company settings as well as in sheltered work environments. A third tactic, based on the view that company inactivity is due to the lack of awareness, is more aggressive promotion of affirmative action policies. It is generally felt that these initiatives will create a framework of norms that will protect the disabled worker in the pursuit and retention of employment.

Other measures focus on more specific difficulties. Agencies call for changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act that will allow the disabled to receive training outside their home provinces. This is particularly important in view of the scarcity of facilities with specialized equipment and expertise for training the disabled. Also noted was the need for changes in the method of funding of ancilliary services. It was argued that the disabled should be financially assisted to the point where they could directly purchase work-related services such as transportation. In their current, almost exclusive, reliance on social agencies to provide these services, they are hampered by the limitations imposed by the relatively slender resources of social agencies and/or the funding limits and inconsistencies of programs under which these services are set up as projects.

Most of the other measures suggested are really methods for stimulating demand and have been treated in an earlier section. They include tax credits, awareness advertising, support for job redesign and modification of job content and equipment for various disabilities, and funding or supplementing the salaries of the disabled.

CONCLUSION

The estimated 85 per cent unemployment rate for the disabled and the wide range of barriers to their labour force participation call for immediate and forceful federal government intervention to restore to this group of citizens a right to work equal in significance to that now enjoyed by the non-disabled. A few basic frameworks for such intervention already exist - in the Canada Human Rights Act, in the affirmative action policies and the various employment programs of the federal government. There is a pressing need for extending the scope of these frameworks to cover the disabled more fully, for modifying them to meet the complex requirements of the disabled population and for strengthening the provisions and/or mechanisms governing compliance.

The weak labour force position of the disabled suggests that employers are unlikely to hire the disabled unless they have no alternative (i.e., they are formally required to do so by law or deferral policy) or they perceive some advantages in doing so (i.e., there is some incentive to counteract their reluctance). The formal requirement to hire disabled is clearly only tenable where firms are under federal jurisdiction. However, in cases where the federal government does considerable business with private sector companies, it would be possible to insist on the development and implementation of affirmative action programs as a condition for contract eligibility. Alternatively, where the contracted work can be done by disabled persons working in their home environments (institutions, private homes) or in sheltered work environments, this possibility should be explored before tenders are let. More indirect forms of pressure would include changes in the building codes, architectural design standards and equipment safety standards

that would guarantee accessibility of the physical environment and work station equipment to the disabled.

For employers to fully appreciate the capabilities of disabled workers, initiatives are required on several points. First, employer awareness of these workers must be improved and the disabled themselves have to become more familiar with employment possibilities in their communities. In this process, the employment services provided by the CEC are pivotal. Their outreach and special needs counselling services to the disabled must be significantly enhanced and their inventories of the working disabled improved. These developments will require that a high priority be given to disabled persons in special and regular CEIC programs.

A second thrust is to develop and make employers aware of the various subsidies and incentives that form the package of support for disabled persons. The eligibility of the latter for special allowances, wage subsidies etc. may be of direct benefit to employer. In addition, employers would readily take advantage of any federal contributions towards building renovations, equipment modifications etc. if such subsidy programs were available. Furthermore, government provisions of assistance for technical aids and expertise would help to remove some of the higher costs that employers associate with the employment of disabled persons.

Finally, there is a need to coordinate the federal effort with municipal and provincial activity on behalf of the disabled and to ensure that the disabled participate fully in the governmental decisions that will affect their lives. To this end, a process of consultation among the three levels of governments and the inclusion of disabled persons in these deliberations seems indicated. This process

could be devised and implemented more easily at this juncture as a result of the enourmous good will that is currently directed towards the disabled population during 1981, the International Year of the Disabled.

